
HERITAGE PRESERVATION AND SACRED ART AFTER THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

JITKA JONOVÁ

ABSTRACT

The Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* specifically contains provisions concerning liturgy but also the preservation of historical monuments and issues of sacred art. There is an urgent question in connection with the development of modern art as to which type of art is suitable for the sacred, liturgical space and which is not. This begs the question as to how to define sacred art. Another problem is raised, however, in connection with the preservation of historic buildings (esp. churches), that being how to reconcile the requirements of church and those of state heritage preservation? Specific questions are presented by disused churches, their sale and subsequent use. There is also the issue of the formation of candidates for the priesthood and priests concerned with preservation of historical monuments and sacred art. The issue will be discussed on the basis of church documents (general and particular) and selected relevant examples. The paper focuses on the *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 44–46, 122–129 in connection not only with preservation of historic church buildings, but with the issue of sacred art (modern art in the Church, sacred furnishings, the commission for sacred art) and that of unneeded “redundant” churches: the use of church buildings for other/ secular purposes.

Key words

Second Vatican Council; *Sacrosanctum Concilium*; Sacred Art (*Arte Sacra*)

DOI: 10.14712/25365398.2017.9

The constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* is primarily associated with the renewal of liturgy, liturgical reform. A number of its provisions, however, are also dedicated to care for historical monuments and the issue of sacral art in the context of the liturgy, liturgical space (44–46, 122–129) and similarly

additional conciliar documents. *Inter Mirifica* (1963), *Lumen Gentium* (1964), *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (1965), *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (1965), and *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) reflect on the one hand the question of the autonomy of art and on the other hand the pastoral relationship between the Church and art in the modern world¹. The Conciliar Fathers thus commemorated an important task of the Church when taking care of art and beauty, both in terms of supporting the creation of new works of art and in maintaining the existing ones.

Art ‘before and at the Council’

The Pontificia Commissio de sacra liturgia preparatoria Concilii Vaticani II discussed the issue of sacred art. Within the discussion, it acknowledged that although freedom of Art is a problem, the Church did not have its own style, in contrast to Music which had Gregoriano Cantus. Additional problems arise, however, in connection with this: what about those who have no sense of art? What about art which offends the religious way of thinking and the problem of the subjectivity of Art.²

It is important to distinguish between ‘decorative religious art’, ‘sacral art’ and ‘liturgical art’ (in relation to the service).³ Sacred Art (*Arte Sacra*) should promote the development of liturgical reform, the active participation of believers and respect the demands of the liturgy.⁴

The proposals expressed the fact that the Church had always been a supporter of beauty, art and granted freedom to various kinds of art. At the same time, however, when they serve the liturgy, there is a need for the Church to pay careful attention and reserve the right to ensure that the work of art was appropriate for the use within the liturgy. Sacred art is known as the noblest activity of the human spirit based on divine beauty. The purpose is to help people focus their minds on God. The Church, therefore, does not claim any particular artistic style, but respects the art of all regions and nations that create sacred art with

¹ Ralf van Bühren. *Kunst und Kirche im 20. Jahrhundert. Die Rezeption des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils*. Paderborn – München – Wien – Zürich: Ferdinand Schöningh 2008, 218.

² Angelo Lameri. *La „Pontificia Commissio de sacra liturgia preparatoria Concilii Vaticani II.“: documenty, testi, verbali*. Roma: Edizioni Liturgiche 2013, 208–209.

³ Ibidem, 212–213.

⁴ Ibidem, 360.

due reverence. If any works of art are therefore clearly in conflict with faith and morals, or are of poor quality or distort taste, they should not be admitted into the Church.

In the case of difficult decisions, ordinaries were advised to consult with experts. Ordinaries also involved setting up a committee composed of experts from the ranks of both clergy and laity. There was a need to take care of artists and they created their works in the spirit of true sacred art. With regard to the liturgical reform, the regulations concerning art, particularly the layout and furnishings of churches (the altar, baptismal font, etc.), needed to be revised. As concerns the paintings, moderation was required as opposed to multiplication, wise prudence to garishness. Similarly, the need for candidates to the priesthood to be trained in sacred art and care of monuments was expressed.⁵

The question of art, particularly in connection with the construction of churches and their furnishings was evident within the negotiations of the preparatory commission. The constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* promoted the establishment of a diocesan commission for both liturgical and sacral art. In connection with permission for the celebration facing people, there was a need to enable going around the altar. The education of both artists and clergy was, however, also considered necessary. The Church has accepted throughout history various artistic movements and is therefore not tied to one unified artistic direction. Only that kind of art which is consistent with the mission of the places can be used, however, in the churches. Historical artistic monuments should be respected and at the same time should be allowed to establish new ones. The Council declined those insensitive changes seeking continuity⁶.

Fine art, sacred art had been highlighted a great deal within the negotiations. Its importance was acknowledged by the fact that the Church never ceased 'to demand the noble service of art.' The Church was always supposed to ensure that things belonging to worship were actually decent, tasteful and beautiful and a sign and a symbol of higher realities. The Church also influenced the artist morally. It was also rightfully always regarded as having a decisive power in the sense that it determined what works of art may be deemed appropriate for the sacred ministry, whether they are in conformity with the faith,

⁵ Ibidem, 412–416, 458–459, 812–835, 859–860.

⁶ Bühren. *Kunst und Kirche im 20. Jahrhundert*, 219–232.

the devotion and the laws adopted with respect to the tradition, while accepting changes in the material, shape and processing (SC 122). The Council declared respect for freedom of art⁷ and recalled that over the centuries the Church has amassed artistic treasures (SC 123). In this context, it should be reminded, however, that from a human point of view, of course, the Church had a preference for specific artists or styles. In the 19th century, pseudo-Roman and pseudo-Gothic cathedrals in particular had become the criteria and rules for many sacred buildings, as well as concerning their equipment. Mass-produced altars had often replaced the artistically valuable old furnishings. Similarly, a negative attitude occurred in relation to Christian art in mission areas⁸. The Church, however, reserved control over the objects placed into the liturgical space. This should be noble beauty. *Let bishops carefully remove from the house of God and from other sacred places those works of artists which are repugnant to faith, morals, and Christian piety, and which offend true religious sense either by depraved forms or by lack of artistic worth, mediocrity and pretence.* During the construction of churches care should be taken to match the liturgical acts and allow for active participation of the believers. (SC 124). The Church rejects any suggestion of iconoclasm, it confirms the preservation of the custom of placing the images of saints in the churches to be worshipped by the believers but at the same time requires the maintenance of their extent, their number and arrangement (SC 125).

In order to maintain objectivity, the Council required ordinaries to hear the opinion of the Diocesan Commission for Sacred Art and possibly other experts and committees when assessing works of art. Ordinaries should at the same time take care that works of art are not stolen or destroyed (SC 126). The Council Fathers demanded that the bishops themselves, or their designated experts who were able to do so, be devoted to artists in order to help them find the spirit of sacred art. Artists should be encouraged to be aware of the meaning and mission of sacred art. It was also recommended, as far as possible, to set up schools or academies of sacred art (SC 127).

For proper implementation of the liturgical reform and the related adjustments of sacred space and its furnishings, the bishops were

⁷ Respect for modern art was even expressed by Pius XII. in the encyclical *Mediator Dei* (1947) in a similar manner as in the later documents of the Second Vatican Council, MD 193, 194, 196.

⁸ Jaroslav V. Polc. *Posvátná liturgie*. Řím: Křesťanská akademie 1981, 405–406.

to prepare a directive concerning the building of churches, the shape and setting up of altars, sanctuaries and the like as soon as possible. Unsatisfactory provisions should be revoked and satisfactory ones maintained. *According to the norm of Art. 22 of this Constitution, the territorial bodies of bishops are empowered to adapt such things to the needs and customs of their different regions; this applies especially to the materials and form of sacred furnishings and vestments* (SC 128). The Council did not want to prescribe anything centrally but wanted to respect local customs in order to promote the development of sacred art in the given area.

In order to be able to do this, the Council recalled the need that the candidates of priesthood would also educate themselves in history of art understanding the principles of sacred art. *In consequence, they will be able to appreciate and preserve the Church's venerable monuments, and be in a position to aid, by good advice, artists who are engaged in producing works of art* (SC 129). The individual members of the clergy have a major influence on the selection of works of art or the implementation of modifications or new religious buildings in various parishes.

The Decree *Inter mirifica* (1963) recalls the relationship between art and morality. Artistic freedom should respect moral values (IM 5–7) and highlight art as a tool of the pastoral activity of the Church (IM 13). Similarly, the Decree *Apostolicam actuositatem* (1965) mentions that the area of culture is an apostolate of the laity as well (AA 5–7).

The Decree *Presbyterorum ordinis* (1965) recalls the obligation of priests to care for the house of God, practice liturgical art in the right manner and also lead the entrusted people (PO 5).

The Constitution *Lumen Gentium* (1964) makes reference to respect for images of Christ, the Virgin Mary and the saints (LG 67).

The Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (1965) focuses on the issue of culture and its development (GS 53–62). Art should be what elevates man to higher concepts of truth, goodness and beauty (GS 57) serving as a reminder that the Church is intended for every one and it is not tied to a specific culture or nation, which is why it is able to establish contact with various cultures (GS 58) and reaffirm the freedom and autonomy of art (GS 59). Contemporary art and artists represent one of the opportunities where dialogue between the Church and the modern world may take place. It is therefore stated once again that the Church does not reject a priori new forms of art, unless they are contrary to other principles.

At the ceremonial meeting at the end of the Council on 8 December 1965, the Pope gave a short speech to artists as well (Aux artistes 1965). He began on behalf of the Church at the Council that if artists were friends of genuine art, then they were also our friends. He recalled that the Church had worked with artists from the beginning when constructing temples and their decoration. Artists are referred to as those who helped the Church imagine an invisible world. It invites them to remain in conjunction with the Church and devote themselves to the service of divine truth. This world needs beauty so as not to sink into despair. Artists should illustrate beauty, spread ideals of friendship, salvation, grace and blessing⁹.

It is apparent that The Second Vatican Council devoted considerable attention to art. Sacred Art is emphasized the most in connection with liturgy and devotion. It is also recalled, however, as a non-negligible element of the pastoral activity of the Church in the world and the dialogue between the Church and art. Art has confirmed autonomy but at the same time should respect the requirements of the Church. In order, however, to enable Church leaders to truly evaluate art, students of theology were supposed to be educated in the area of art¹⁰.

Taste and its formation

The Council tried to promote a form of ‘objectivity’, wherein kitsch and unripe forms should not be admitted into the Church (but what about naive folk art in a village church? – what about sensitivity to location and circumstances), the fact that something is modern does not guarantee that it is valuable. Something which has an unusual shape or unusual idea does not necessarily mean, however, that it is inartistic. In order to ensure (as far as possible) an objective evaluation, the Council recommended that the Commission for Sacred Art consult it with experts, ordinaries, so that only what belonged there was accepted in the Church (SC 126). Liturgical space and its furnishings were supposed to be as aesthetically beautiful as well as functional (an artistically valuable monstrosity – *ostensorium* –, which is too heavy loses its practical utility).

⁹ Bühnen. *Kunst und Kirche im 20. Jahrhundert*, 665–666.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 242–251.

As early as the conciliar negotiations, the Council Fathers warned that the sacred vestments had to be dignified and simple (no garishness). Similarly, sacred objects should not be made of valuable materials even for pastoral reasons since expensive clothes were not understood as a gift of Christ but as a vanity of the Church in the world. There was also a view that everything that did not serve for ordinances or was not of historical significance was to be removed from the churches. Others, by contrast, argued for precious objects wherein poverty was actually intended to be practised in personal life and should not affect those sacred objects and vestments which were supposed to decorate churches, liturgy serving the glory of God. The choice of materials and forms was left to the Episcopal Conferences so that they could adapt it to the situation of the local Church. There even occurred, however, the idea as to whether it was possible to identify beauty with the value of the object, whether there was a need for the beautiful to be expensive as well?¹¹ How should rules for the assessment of beauty be established and was it possible to establish them in general?

It became even more noticeable when negotiating about modern art and its presence in the house of God. There was criticism that modern art had not yet created art forms appropriate for religious purposes. It was rational, functional and practical. While the historicizing styles of the 19th century were uncritically accepted by the Church at times, Pius XII was strongly against the style of Le Corbusier and the like. Criticism was also expressed in relation to Wotruba's church on the outskirts of Vienna. Others, however, highlighted modern art and its simplicity and efficiency¹².

By emphasizing the freedom of art and leaving decisions to the respective ecclesiastical authorities, the Council did not resolve the question itself.

The first critical moments were concerned, when applying the liturgical reforms, with the new arrangement of the liturgical space. The modifications of existing churches, particularly the historically valuable ones, were to be carried out sensitively and also in accordance with the state regulations on heritage preservation (it was also related to the furnishing of churches, paraments, etc.). A number of the consequences of the implementation of the liturgical reform to equip

¹¹ Polc. *Posvátná liturgie*, 281–284.

¹² *Ibidem*, 291–296.

churches and art objects were not wanted or intended by the Council. Various experiments by the clergy and lay people without any consultation with the appropriate authority provided ‘strong arguments’ for opponents. Possible “dead ends” could have, in contrast, a positive impact on ‘the development of taste’. This is still acceptable but is not any longer. There was a need to regulate unrestrained negotiations, which were almost like ‘desecration and iconoclasm’, in the interest of liturgical reform¹⁵.

It turned out that it was no longer possible to expect the clergy to have taste and feeling for art in general. The Congregation for the Clergy issued the Circular Letter *Opera Artis* (1971) which recalled the need to protect artistically valuable works, comply with the regulations and respect the competent authority (the ordinary) when implementing the liturgical reform. It was namely ordered to protect old valuable works of art¹⁴.

Similarly, even the new liturgical books, the Code of Canon Law and other documents recalled the principles established by the Council in relation to art (form and material) and heritage preservation¹⁵.

The dialogue with contemporary art still continued, however. It was an extremely urgent issue. Although art is autonomous, the question remains as to what kind of art is suitable for sacred liturgical spaces and what kind is not. This suggests the question as to what way sacred art should be defined? Is it merely ‘religious kitsch’ beautiful and attractive art without content and spirit? What kind of modern art is acceptable and what kind is tasteless?

Pope Paul VI demonstrated an interest in art from the beginning of his pontificate. He was interested in having artists who would lead people to God. In his speeches, he aimed at fruitful dialogue between the Church and modern art. He assessed artistic creativity positively and was a Pope who was not afraid to open up the collection of contemporary religious art in the Vatican Museums. Paul VI perceived the post-conciliar period as a new spring time for religious art (*la foioritura di una primavera nuova dell’Arte religiosa postconciliare*)¹⁶.

¹⁵ Bühren. *Kunst und Kirche im 20. Jahrhundert*, 267–277.

¹⁴ Acta Apostolicae Sedis 63 (1971), 315–317. Bühren. *Kunst und Kirche im 20. Jahrhundert*, 277–281.

¹⁵ Bühren. *Kunst und Kirche im 20. Jahrhundert*, 281–302.

¹⁶ Ibidem, 302–323.

Certain criteria, in particular in the area of morality, were provided by the Council and even though liberalism had spread in the world particularly in sexual matters, there was a need to maintain moral principles, tact, discretion even in dialogue with the modern world in religious art so that art could bring the beauty of the gospel to the world¹⁷.

Pope John Paul II continued with the dialogue. Similarly, to Paul VI, he promoted the evangelization of art and through art. He founded the Pontifical Council for Culture (1982). During the beatification of Fra Angelico, the Council proclaimed him the patron of all artists¹⁸.

The requirement of the Council in order to ensure basic orientation of the clergy in art and heritage preservation was that education in these fields was included as early as the time of theological formation. Their liturgical – pastoral education was required within the actual context of sacral art and architecture¹⁹.

A considerable number of new religious buildings and art objects in the post-conciliar period demonstrated that contemporary art has its place in the Church and helps spread the gospel as desired by the Council²⁰. Opponents of new buildings or objects always appeared but there have always existed those who did not like a specific architectural style or objects in the history of art.

The respective bishop conferences sought to establish regulations for sacred art and generally also sought a space for a dialogue with contemporary artists²¹. The duty of the Church to care for already accumulated cultural wealth and strive to maintain good taste for sacred art was emphasized repeatedly and also helped by promoting the establishment of diocesan museums²².

Additional successful realizations in line with modern sacred art also existed. In connection with the preservation of historical buildings (particularly churches) another problem arises – how to coordinate the demands of the Church and the requirements of state heritage preservation? The Church prevents cultural values but at the same time churches are cases of “living buildings” which should fulfil their

¹⁷ Ibidem, 323–334.

¹⁸ Ibidem, 335–361.

¹⁹ Ibidem, 367–372, 426–428, 526–532.

²⁰ Ibidem, 373–394.

²¹ Ibidem, 361–367, 415–419.

²² Ibidem, 451–526, 532–541, 573–600.

purpose and meet the liturgical regulations. When modifying existing churches, it may be necessary at times to compromise on both sides.²⁵

‘Redundant churches’

Specific questions arise in relation to deserted and disused churches, their sale and subsequent use for secular purposes. Historically, it was usually by will of the ruler or nobility that old or unused churches were handed over for secular use (in the Habsburg monarchy, this was carried out under Emperor Joseph II wherein many of those cancelled churches were rebuilt into scientific institutions (libraries) but also into accommodation spaces or handed over to military administrative bodies. Similarly, secularization hit revolutionary France in particular.

Although the Second Vatican Council resolved care for old and new sacred monuments, it did not pay attention to the situation wherein a monument had lost its original purpose. The Code of Canon Law takes this situation into account: *Sacred places lose their dedication or blessing if they have been largely destroyed or have been either upon a decision of the local ordinary, or, in fact, permanently handed over for secular use.* (Can.1212).

In the context of the Church’s efforts to preserve sacred monuments, such care of these monuments in connection with a decrease in believers may lead to a situation whereby the spiritual manager deals more with repairing churches than with pastoral activities. Churches are, however, a relatively stable reminder of Christianity, particularly in Europe. Perhaps the Night of Churches (*Die Lange Nacht der Kirchen*) popular in Austria, Germany and the Czech Republic is worth recalling. This activity in a way fulfils the evangelizing mission of sacred art, like the popular tours of sacred monuments in general, diocesan museums, etc. The Church thereby contributes to the cultural prosperity of society.

Back to the question outlined above, however, does the Church have merely the function of protecting historical monuments? In extreme cases, there occur sales (sometimes only for a symbolic fee) of the

²⁵ Stanislav Balík and Jiří Hanuš. *Letnice dvacátého století Druhý vatikánský koncil a české země*. Brno: Centrum pro studium demokracie a kultury 2012, 195–210. Karel Rechlík. “Výtvarné dílo a jeho místo v sakrálním prostoru”. In *Nové kostely a kaple z konce 20. století v České republice*, ed. Jiří Vaverka et al. Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství 2001, 132–145.

religious buildings to municipalities or private entities to prevent their destruction. While the transfer of the property to municipalities is usually not a problem – the space is used for cultural purposes (libraries, exhibition premises), the transfer to private hands raises legitimate concerns about possible dehonouring of sacred, although deconsecrated space.

The local bishop conference in Germany, for example, is of the view that the Catholic church will have to demolish, sell or rebuild 700 churches over the next decade alone. There are reports of up to one third of the churches in the Netherlands where it is not easy to find new use for a church. The obstacle is primarily the cost of maintenance and rebuilding. In addition, these often consist of buildings listed as part of the cultural heritage which limits the possibility of building or rebuilding.

Churches are often turned into cultural centres, kindergartens or special interest clubs. In Arnhem, the Netherlands, St. Joseph's Church was turned into a skating rink, while in Bristol, England, a school for circus performers is located in St. Paul's Church. In Bielefeld, Northern Germany, in contrast, a 130-year-old church in the Neo-Gothic style was turned into a restaurant aptly called *Glück und Seligkeit* (translated as happiness and bliss). New owners in England, a married couple, had to commit themselves in the purchase agreement to not engaging in anything that would be in contradiction with the principles of the Anglican Church²⁴. The problem of a selling redundant churches is not only an issue within the Catholic Church but one in Europe in general, where the number of believers attending Church is on the decline.

In the Czech Lands, the fate of the church of St. Michael Archangel in Prague, which was secularized as early as at the time of the Josephine reforms stirred up the public. The Ministry of Culture entrusted it to the National Library of the Czech Republic in 1983. The Czech

²⁴ "Obývací pokoj v chrámové lodi. Církev hledá nové využití pro staré kostely," last modified January 21, 2015, <http://archiv.ihned.cz/c1-63406910-obyvaci-pokoj-v-chramove-lodi-cirkev-hleda-nove-vyuziti-pro-stare-kostely> "Europe's Empty Churches Go on Sale," last modified January 2, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/europes-empty-churches-go-on-sale-1420245559> "The Last Supper: Germany's Great Church Sell-Off," last modified February 14, 2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/german-catholic-and-protestant-churches-sell-off-church-buildings-a-885054.html> "Europe: Even churches are going on sale because of the crisis," last modified November 9, 2012, <http://vaticaninsider.lastampa.it/en/world-news/detail/articolo/anglicani-anglicans-anglicanos-chiesa-church-iglesia-19584/>.

Primate Cardinal František Tomášek along with the leaders of the Servite Order insisted in 1989 on at least an appropriate use of the secular church. The protests of Cardinal Tomášek, who wrote: *I consider it an act in contradiction with our cultural tradition to provide the monastery complex of St. Michael's for commercial use in any form*, did not help.

The National Library rented the church to the company Kontakt Moravia, Inc. up until the year 2029, which subsequently transferred all rights to a subsidiary, the company Michal Praha, spol. s r.o. This company, under the pretext of 'cultural use' has built the so-called 'St. Michael's Mystery,' or a multimedia show and polyekran cinema with a restaurant, lift, vibrating floor, etc. This form of use was objected to by representatives of the Church claiming that even if the space does not serve for religious purposes and is considered deconsecrated, it needed to be used in an appropriate way, not for humiliating or dishonourable purposes. To speak of 'deconsecration' is unsubstantial and therefore incorrect. They remain sacred spaces with all the consequences arising from this for their users. Sacral objects cannot be sold freely as secular houses or flats.

As early as at the international symposium 'New Uses for Old Churches' conducted in October 1997 in Teplice, a serious opinion in relation to this was expressed by the expert Vít Honys: *We have a moral obligation to preserve the buildings for those who come after us. We do not know at present what to do with them but the next generation may come up with something* (Lidové noviny, 21 February 1998). The National Library sold St. Michael's Church in 2005 including the crypts, tombs and burial grounds to the existing leasing body, despite the protests of representatives of renowned cultural, educational and scientific institutions and the general public. And this for actually a fraction of the price²⁵. The situation of St. Michael's Church has remained 'unresolved.'

Sale or demolition of a church is considered a last resort and demolition should moreover be only confined to artistically insignificant objects. There actually do not exist any guidelines specifying when it is possible to proceed with the sales of a church. In order to proceed with the sales of a church, there needs to be a condition that the church

²⁵ "Kostel sv. Michaela Archanděla na Starém Městě v Praze" <http://www.svatymichael.cz/index.html> <http://www.katyd.cz/clanky/na-kostelu-nikdo-nezbohatne.html> *Nová využití pro staré kostely – New uses for old churches – Neue Nutzungen für alte Kirchen: Teplice 23. –26.10.1997* (Teplice: Albis international, 2002).

will not be transformed into, for example, a bar, nightclub, etc. in the future²⁶. In this regard, this is no longer merely a matter of Church regulations but state laws (property rights) and in the case of historically valuable buildings also of the state preservation of cultural heritage. The question is to what extent should the Church have the opportunity to establish general guidelines for the use of property sacred in nature – an easement?

In contrast with secularization of churches and sacral buildings corresponding with the will of state power, it is now the Church itself which is forced to seek a solution for churches that have no use for religious purposes and thus become “superfluous.” A church, however, which has passed into secular use continues to be perceived as a church, which continues to affect the possibility of its ‘non-religious’ use. The issue of ‘redundant churches’ represents an intricate subject that has no clear solution.

Conclusion

The documents of the Second Vatican Council have in many ways influenced sacred art, its creation, mission and preservation. The Council Fathers sought preservation of freedom of art, as well as enhancement of sacred art. Although various excesses occurred from time to time within the context of liturgical reform, particularly when in consultation with the competent ecclesiastical authority, (Ordinary) was not respected. Support for modern art allowed for creating quite a few high-quality sacred buildings which have demonstrated that it is possible to build a church in accordance with modern architectural trends (but also meet the requirements for a functional sacred space). Modern sacral art has its place both in modern churches and historical sacral buildings. There is always a need, however, to respect the requirements stated by the Church and the context of the given work of art.

The documents of the Council have encouraged the Church not only to build new, but also to care and preserve the existing cultural wealth of the Church. The Church is not only a museum, although religious

²⁶ “Vatican warns against conversion of churches into bars and nightclubs,” published November 28, 2009, <http://www.christiantoday.com/article/vatican.warns.against.conversion.of.churches.into.bars.and.nightclubs/24747.htm>.

buildings and other objects also represent one of the options of evangelization through beauty that leads to the Creator.

The Church at present, especially in Europe and elsewhere outside the West, is facing a new problem, the sale of unused, redundant churches. This solution is considered an extreme one and if it is performed, there is a need to seek guarantees that the works of art are still used in accordance with the character of the place (conversion to libraries, exhibition halls, etc.).

*Katedra církevních dějin a církevního práva
Cyrilometodějská teologická fakulta Univerzity Palackého
Univerzitní 22
779 00 Olomouc
e-mail: jitka.jonova@upol.cz*